

VZCZCXRO7617
RR RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDJ #0442/01 1281539
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 071539Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9232
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3802
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000442

STATE FOR AF/E, PRM/AFR, S/CRS, AND USAID
ADDIS ABABA FOR REFCOORD
NAIROBI FOR RDRAPCHO AND REFCOORD
GENEVA FOR KPERKINS
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SMIG](#) [SO](#) [ET](#) [DJ](#) [XA](#)

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI - INFLUX OF SOMALI REFUGEES STRAINS RESOURCES AND
EXISTING CAMP CAPACITY

REF: A) DJIBOUTI 439
B) DJIBOUTI 223
C) 07 DJIBOUTI 1004

¶1. SUMMARY: Ethiopia-based Regional Refugee Coordinator (REFCOORD) and Washington-based Refugee Officer Matthew Austin recently visited Djibouti on separate occasions to survey the refugee situation and assess the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) activities. During these visits, the National Office of Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Stricken People (ONARS) reported that the Government of Djibouti (GODJ) continues to search for solutions to cope with the current refugee and migrant influx. Since the beginning of 2008, the refugee population at Ali Addeh camp has increased by 2,000 persons, or 20 percent. ONARS struggles to accommodate the refugee influx and faults UNHCR Geneva for their lack of financial and resource assistance to Djibouti. Meanwhile, UNHCR seeks NGO support for extending activities to refugees at the camp. END SUMMARY.

GODJ BLAMES UNHCR GENEVA

¶2. In 2006, UNHCR Geneva launched a special appeal to address the movement of Somali refugees and internally displaced people in the Horn of Africa. The only condition to receive money from this fund was that there had to be an influx of Somali refugees in the country during 2006-2007. Mr. Hassan Omar, the Secretary General of Djibouti's Ministry of Interior and the Executive of ONARS, traveled to Geneva in October 2007 to lobby for money from this fund and reportedly received a commitment from Geneva for USD 775,750 for July 2007 - to December 2008; however, Geneva has yet to give the funds to Djibouti. Mr. Omar reported that UNHCR Geneva provided an official statement to the Ambassador of Djibouti in Geneva documenting the commitment. Nevertheless, the GODJ finds itself in a deadlock without the anticipated aid.

REFUGEE CAMP ISSUES

¶3. The REFCOORD visited post from March 10-12 and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) conducted an additional visit from March 29-April 1. Both visitors, accompanied by the post refugee officer and representatives from UNHCR and ONARS, witnessed refugees crossing the border between Djibouti and Somaliland (northwestern Somalia) at Loyada, visited Djibouti's sole refugee camp at Ali Addeh, and discussed the food pipeline with the World Food Program (WFP).

¶4. During both visits to the refugee camp in Ali Addeh, the delegation found the refugees who were at the border the previous

day collecting 15 days of food rations. The food distribution was not a complete ration. It lacked essential items due to communication failures by UNHCR and ONARS with the WFP. Despite the problems encountered, food distribution has improved considerably since the last delegation visit in 2007. For example, in an effort to improve the distribution process, ONARS replaced the camp manager. Nevertheless, room for improvement remains, including the need for a well managed and constructed food distribution center and inventory controls. UNHCR plans to send the new camp manager to Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp for training with WFP, UNHCR, and CARE, who manage food distribution for a camp population of approximately 190,000. PRM stressed the importance of sending the camp manager for training immediately.

15. Refugees complained about the lack of an adequate supply of water and organized activities. The bore holes and traditional wells are insufficient in number, and do not contain enough water to maintain Sphere standards of 15 liters per person per day for the refugee population. In addition, the water in these wells is not drinkable because of the salt content. A low water supply forces UNCHR to stagger the water availability to the refugees. Refugees line their jerry cans up at the distribution point waiting for the allotted time to collect water. UNHCR plans to conduct a hydrological survey in the Ali Addeh area, and subsequently develop the water system, if funds are available. A large number of the population, especially the youth, is idle. UNHCR would like to address this issue by implementing vocational training, income generating, and entertaining activities to alleviate the mounting pressures caused by a lack of activities. In addition, the refugee camp lacks a community center, which would be an effective venue for such programs and various sensitization campaigns.

DJIBOUTI 00000442 002 OF 002

REFUGEE CAMP LACKS NGO SUPPORT

17. The refugee camp lacks participation by international NGOs. Currently only one international NGO, the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (ADMA), and one local NGO, the Association for the Protection and Advancement of the Family (APEF), work in the refugee camp. AMDA runs a 24-hour medical clinic at the refugee camp, with one doctor, one midwife, two national nurses and two refugee nurses, working on consultations, treatment, MCH, HIV/AIDS, hygiene, family planning, and nutrition awareness programs. It also operates a pharmacy, supplied with medicines from a stock in its Ali Sabieh office. There is, however, no proper internal control on the procurement and distribution of these medical supplies, and a strong stock control mechanism needs to be developed.

18. The clinic is very Spartan, lacking electricity and running water. Each examination room is divided by wooden partitions or corrugated metal. UNHCR expanded a health clinic donated by USAID in Ali Addeh village, to provide comfortable health services for the refugees. As construction ended for the new site in February 2008, UNHCR discovered that the contractor had failed to install the electrical system. UNHCR has not provided final payment to the contractor and is in discussion on resolving the matter. UNCHR plans to reopen the clinic in May and expects that AMDA will relocate to the new facilities.

19. The other NGO located at the camp, APEF, collects complaints and identifies issues from refugees, compiles data on them, and passes them on to UNHCR for resolution. This NGO, like AMDA, has a daily presence in the camp. It is one of the only sources where refugees can voice their concerns and complaints, since UNHCR's protection staff presence is limited. A strong international NGO is needed in Djibouti to meet the needs of the growing refugee population and to relieve the burden from the overwhelmed UNHCR staff. Matthew Austin is encouraging NGOs operating in the region to consider establishing operations in Djibouti.

110. The camp also has a small primary school (grades 3-8) run by UNHCR, in partnership with UNESCO-PEERS. Each class has approximately 40 students. All children wishing to enroll were able

to do so at the beginning of the current school year. However, the influx of new refugees has exceeded to capacity of the school to accommodate all new students. UNHCR plans to build new classrooms, but could not say when they would be completed.

¶11. After the completion of primary school, the children do not continue with their education because there is no secondary school located in the refugee camp, even though one is needed. UNESCO's PEERS office in Djibouti provides technical assistance and teaching material. Teachers explained they need more training, more material to teach with, and more school supplies.

¶12. COMMENT: A year after the 2007 PRM delegation's visit, Post notes positive changes in refugee management with all parties involved. Nevertheless, Post concurs with REFCOORD and Refoff's remarks that with the ongoing influx of southern Somali refugees, more needs to be done by UNHCR and its implementing partners on camp and food distribution management, together with refugee reception, protection, and assistance. Additional improvements should include providing adequate water supply, possibly building a community center and creating activities, as well as reinforcing health, educational and nutritional capacities to meet refugee needs at the camp. To meet these goals, UNHCR needs additional funds and training for its existing implementing partners, and the assistance of at least one internationally recognized large NGO with experience and resources. END COMMENT.

SYMINGTON